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SUBJECT: NUNS UNITE TO CREATE ANTI-TRAFFICKING NETWORK

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¶1. Summary. More than 30 nuns from 26 countries came together in Rome for a week-long Training Seminar organized by the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See that culminated in the creation of the first-ever international religious network to combat trafficking in persons. The network - "International Network of Religious Against Trafficking in Persons" (INRATIP)- issued its first Public Statement at a session attended by key Vatican representatives, members of the Holy See Diplomatic Corps, faith-based organizations and the Vatican media corps. The Public Session also highlighted a letter from President George W. Bush to the participants "helping to fight this great evil by harnessing the energy and resources of individuals guided by faith and dedicated to the cause of justice." A compilation of the Seminar proceedings is set to be published in January 2008. End summary.

¶2. More than 30 nuns from 26 nations came together in Rome from October 15-20, to create the first-ever international, inter-congregational religious network to combat trafficking in persons. (Info addressee posts are those from countries which sent participants to the seminar.) The nuns gathered at an anti-trafficking Training Seminar sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP), and organized by the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See and the Italian Union of Major Superiors (USMI). Brought together by the training seminar, the nuns left united in their determination to fight trafficking through the creation of their new network INRATIP.

¶3. The training seminar was a unique gathering of nuns facing the challenge of human trafficking in countries of origin, transit, and destination. Gathered together for the first time, the nuns developed and strengthened networking mechanisms as well as their own communications skills. Every participant gave a first-hand TIP assessment of her local situation in the form of an individual country report. These reports allowed participants to share contacts, problems, solutions, and best practices.

¶4. The training seminar also provided the nuns with valuable information on how to communicate effectively and disseminate valuable information across a global network. The nuns discussed use of the latest internet technology and communications mediums. INRATIP will now use these resources to strengthen national and international capacities to tackle TIP through multi-disciplinary, political, and strategic approaches.

¶5. President Bush's letter to the participants stated, "Those gathered for this seminar are helping to fight this great evil by harnessing the energy and resources of individuals guided by faith and dedicated to the cause of justice. I also applaud those who helped organize this seminar for your commitment to the awareness and prevention of human exploitation. Your efforts reflect the very best of the human spirit and help build a world where every life is respected."

¶6. President Bush's words were echoed on the final day of the training seminar, which had a public session featuring a number of prominent speakers including Monsignor Pietro Parolin, Vatican Undersecretary of State. Monsignor Parolin applauded Embassy Vatican's efforts in the fight against this modern-day slavery. Father Pietro Trabucco of the Union of Superiors General (USG) expressed his hope that male religious would become more involved addressing the "demand" side of the issue through pastoral work with clients. Sister Victoria Toya,

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Secretary General of the International Union of Superiors

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General (UISG) and Sr. Bernadette Sangma, the Union's delegate for trafficking issues, spoke about their efforts to train women religious on practical ways to engage in the fight against trafficking. Also present was Ms. Marcella Lucidi, Undersecretary of the Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, who expressed her desire to work with the sisters of INRATIP and who is currently at the forefront of drafting new national legislation to combat human trafficking.

¶7. Media coverage of the public session was extensive. The Public Session was attended by members of the Vatican media corps including Catholic News Service, Vatican Radio (English, Italian and French services), ANSA (a leading Italian news agency), The Tablet and Inside the Vatican (both influential weekly magazines).

¶8. The training seminar ended with the nuns' commitment to work together in the fight against trafficking in persons through INRATIP. The network is already actively building its website and blogging capabilities, and released its first Public Statement on October 19, 2007. In this statement, the nuns said that "Our hope rests in a vision of humanity which honors the principle that no woman, child or man is a commodity for sale. Relying on the love of God, we ask you to join us in our prayers and our actions to eradicate this social and moral evil."

¶9. Comment. Embassy Vatican will continue its support of the fight against trafficking by editing and producing a compilation of the country reports presented during the training seminar. This compilation is set to be completed in January 2008 and will include remarks from President and Mrs. Bush, Pope Benedict XVI, and other distinguished contributors from the Vatican, NGOs, and the Department of State. Post expects to distribute this publication widely among its contacts in the fight against

trafficking in persons. End Comment.SANDROLINI